

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 04884 080933Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-02 CA-01 VO-05 CIAE-00 INR-10  
NSAE-00 /029 W

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R 080720Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1759  
INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 4884

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: AFSP, PDIP, TS, LY  
SUBJ: POSSIBLE HARASSMENT OF AMEMBASSY TUNIS LOCAL  
EMPLOYEES BY LIBYAN AUTHORITIES

1. OVER THE YEARS EMBASSY HAS HAD OCCASION TO SEND  
MEMBERS OF OUR LOCAL STAFF TO LIBYA FOR TDY. UNTIL  
RECENT MONTHS, VISAS WERE OBTAINED WITH MINIMUM DELAY  
AND TRAVEL WAS PERFORMED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.  
RECENTLY THERE HAS BEEN WHAT MAY BE INTENTIONAL HARASS-  
MENT BY LIBYAN AUTHORITIES AS FOLLOWS:

A. DURING OCTOBER 16 - NOVEMBER 18, 1977, A SENIOR  
LOCAL EMPLOYEE, MR. MOHAMED GHARBI, WAS SENT ON TDY TO  
TRIPOLI TO ASSIST WITH RELOCATION OF BUDGET AND FISCAL  
FUNCTIONS. WHILE PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE FROM LIBYA,  
AFTER COMPLETION OF POLICE AND IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES,  
HE WAS APPROACHED BY THE POLICE WHO ASKED FOR HIS PASS-  
PORT. WHILE WAITING THE RETURN OF HIS PASSPORT, ANOTHER  
OFFICER QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT  
AND ASKED WHERE HE HAD STAYED. HIS PASSPORT WAS  
RETURNED AFTER ONE HOUR. HE ASKED THE OFFICER IF  
THERE WAS A PROBLEM; THE REPLY WAS QUOTE ONLY A  
ROUTINE CHECK UNQUOTE.

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B. GHARBI RETURNED TO LIBYA FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY  
22 - FEBRUARY 1, 1978. DURING THIS PERIOD HE WAS  
FOLLOWED EACH TIME HE LEFT THE EMBASS OR THE APART-  
MENT PROVIDED BY THE EMBASSY. ON THE DAY OF DEPARTURE,  
AFTER COMPLETION OF ALL POLICE AND CUSTOMS FORMALITIES,  
HIS PASSPORT WAS AGAIN TAKEN BY THE POLICE. IT WAS  
RETURNED 20 MINUTES LATER WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATION.

C. GHARBI AGAIN RETURNED TO LIBYA FOR ADDITIONAL TDY FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 22 - MAY 6, 1978. HE ENCOUNTERED NO PROBLEMS UPON ARRIVAL. HOWEVER, HE SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED A REQUEST, THROUGH AN EMBASSY DRIVER, TO STOP BY THE AIRPORT TO SEE THE POLICE CHIEF. DURING THIS VISIT, HE WAS ASKED MANY PERSONAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING NAME, ADDRESS, EDUCATION, FINANCIAL STATUS, HOME, CAR, OCCUPATION BEFORE EMPLOYMENT WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, ETC. A PHOTOCOPY OF HIS PASSPORT WAS ALSO MADE AT THIS TIME. WHEN HE ASKED WHY ALL THE TROUBLE, HE WAS TOLD QUOTE NOTHING SERIOUS AND YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR STAY WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS UNQUOTE. HE ENCOUNTERED NO DIFFICULTIES WHEN HE DEPARTED A MONTH LATER.

D. GHARBI WAS SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO LIBYA FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 26 - JULY 15, 1978. AFTER OBTAINING THE REQUIRED VISAS FOR HIMSELF, HIS WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN, HE ATTEMPTED TO ENTER LIBYA VIA ROAD USING HIS PERSONAL VEHICLE. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELAY AT THE BORDER, HE WAS FINALLY INFORMED THAT HE COULD NOT ENTER, BUT THAT HIS FAMILY COULD. IN HIS PRESENCE, THE POLICE CROSSED OUT HIS VISA AND ENTRY STAMP AND STATED THEY WERE ACTING ON ORDERS FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

E. THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OCCURRED WHEN WE ATTEMPTED  
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TO SEND ANOTHER EMPLOYEE, MR. EMAR SABERAN, AND IRANIAN CITIZEN, TO TRIPOLI TO ASSIST WITH THEIR CASHIER VACANCY. BEFORE APPLYING FOR HIS VISA, HE SOUGHT GUIDANCE FROM HIS EMBASSY AND WAS ADVISED THAT IRAN AND LIBYA DID NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BUT THAT HE SHOULD NOT HAVE A PROBLEM IN OBTAINING A VISA. AFTER SEVERAL TRIPS TO THE LIBYAN CONSULATE, HE WAS FINALLY INFORMED THAT HE COULD BE ISSUED A VISA IF THE IRANIAN EMBASSY WOULD PROVIDE AN ARABIC TRANSLATIO OF HIS PASSPORT. THE IRANIAN EMBASSY REFUSED, STATING THAT FARSI AND ARABIC ARE WRITTEN IN THE ASME SCRIPT, AND THAT IRANIANS CURRENLTY IN LIBYA DO NOT HAVE PASSPORTS WITH ARABIC TRANSLATIONS.

2. IN SUMMARY, WHILE THE ABOVE MAY NOT BE DEFINITIVE PROOF OF HARRASSMENT, OR INDICATIVE OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE, TUNIS BELIEVES THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF THESE INCIDENTS.

3. AS A RESULT OF ALL THIS, WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CEASE, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, OUR PROGRAM OF PROVIDING A FSL CASHIER TDY TO TRIPOLI, AS WE NO LONGER HAVE

QUALIFIED, WILLING FSL CANDIDATES TO PERFORM SUCH  
SERVICE.  
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## Message Attributes

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